

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 2, as amended, remain herein.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite all of the limitations of claim 3 and claim 3 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Also, minor edits for clarity have been made to claims 1 and 2.

1. Claims 1 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Randmae U.S. Patent 5,032,919. Claim 1 has been amended to recite all of the limitations of claim 3 and claim 3 has been cancelled, thereby mooting its rejection.

The presently claimed focus adjustment mechanism includes engaging protrusions for entering into a rail groove via notches and for engagement with the rail groove. The focus adjusting ring includes a stopper for abutting against the protrusions of the imaging element mount so that rotation of the focus adjusting ring is restricted at a predetermined angular position when the focus adjusting ring rotates in the opposite direction. This arrangement is nowhere disclosed or suggested in the cited reference.

Serial No.: 09/774,062

The Office Action cites Randmae '919 as allegedly disclosing the focus adjusting ring having a stopper for abutting the protrusions of the imaging element mount. The Office Action incorrectly describes Randmae '919 as disclosing focus adjusting ring 17 having a stopper 48 for abutting the protrusions "of the imaging element mount 42." Actually, Randmae '919, column 3, lines 1-2, describes element 42 as "cam follower 42 extends radially outward from each guide bearing 34," and Randmae '919, column 2, lines 60-62, describes "three guide bearings 34 are positioned radially outward from the flange 26." Thus, stopper 48 is not for abutting the protrusions of the imaging element mount, but instead, is for abutting the protrusions of cam follower 42 extending from guide bearing 34. This makes sense, because Randmae '919, column 3, line 39 to column 4, line 20, describes assembly of carrier 22 and attached imaging element 20 to tab 68 to lock the focusing ring, and mentions problems associated with inadvertent separation by the operator. Although Randmae '919 minimizes such difficulty, it still is possible inadvertently to separate the assembly from outside the mechanism, and if an operator

Serial No.: 09/774,062

erroneously pulls and turns focusing ring 17, ring 17 is free to disengage from tab 68. Randmae '919 does not disclose applicants' mechanism including the focus adjusting ring having a stopper for abutting the protrusions of the imaging element mount located inside said main frame opposite the focus adjusting ring, as recited in applicants' claim 1. Such assembly cannot easily be disassembled from the outside.

For the foregoing reasons, Randmae '919 fails to disclose all elements of applicants' claimed invention, and therefore is not a proper basis for rejection under §102. And, there is no disclosure or teaching in Randmae '919 that would have suggested the desirability of modifying any portions thereof effectively to anticipate or suggest applicants' presently claimed invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

2. Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Randmae '919 and Takahashi U.S. Patent 5,739,853.

Claim 2, which depends from claim 1, is allowable for the same reasons as claim 1, as explained herein.

Serial No.: 09/774,062

Moreover, the Office Action admits that Randmae '919 does not disclose applicants' at least one ligulate member protruding from the imaging mount and cites Takahashi '953 as allegedly teaching same. However, Takahashi '953 does not provide the deficiencies of Randmae '919 explained herein.

For the foregoing reasons, neither Randmae '919 nor Takahashi '953 contains any teaching, suggestion, reason, motivation or incentive that would have led one of ordinary skill in the art to applicants' claimed invention. Nor is there any disclosure or teaching in either of these references that would have suggested the desirability of combining any portions thereof effectively to anticipate or suggest applicants' presently claimed invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 2 are now proper in form and patentably distinguished over all grounds of rejection stated in the Office Action. Accordingly, allowance of claims 1 and 2 is respectfully requested.

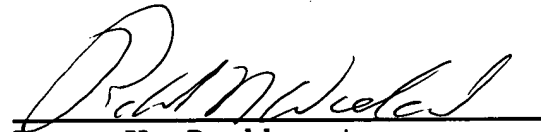
Serial No.: 09/774,062

Should the Examiner deem that any further action by the applicants would be desirable to place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is requested to telephone applicants' undersigned representatives.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date



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